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All Eyes on You: The Impact of Increased Surveillance and Media Publicity on Police Identity

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ALL EYES ON YOU: THE IMPACT OF INCREASED SURVEILLANCE AND
MEDIA PUBLICITY ON POLICE IDENTITY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Sara Rodrigues

June 2018

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

ALL EYES ON YOU: THE IMPACT OF INCREASED SURVEILLANCE AND
MEDIA PUBLICITY ON POLICE IDENTITY

by

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June 2018

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ABSTRACT

ALL EYES ON YOU: THE IMPACT OF INCREASED SURVEILLANCE AND MEDIA PUBLICITY ON POLICE IDENTITY

by Sara Rodrigues

The recent surge in media footage surrounding police killings of unarmed black men clearly signifies the national concern for police violence, yet researchers have yet to study police identity in connection with such publicized inequality. This qualitative study closes this gap in research by addressing the following questions: “How do patrolling officers think about and experience their jobs at this particular historical juncture of increased internet and media exposure?” and, “How does the mass exposure and scrutiny of police violence shape police perceptions of their work and impact their work identity?” Face to face semi-structured interviews, symbolic interactionism, and interpretive research methods were used to uncover how eighteen current Bay Area patrolling officers come to perceive their collective identity as threatened and the four strategies they use to cope. First, some officers strengthen their collective identity by isolating themselves from civilians and spending more time on and off-duty strengthening their bonds with fellow likeminded officers. Secondly, a number of officers separate their collective and individual identities by concealing their occupational identities when off-duty. Thirdly, some officers deliberate over the choice of remaining in the occupation, and lastly, officers work towards preserving their collective identity by avoiding “negative” media and by using a bad apple narrative that distances the “few bad police officers” from the larger group of heroes. These four coping strategies, in turn, hold great potential in negatively impacting police-civilian relationships.

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Introduction

The documented death of Eric Garner is one example of the newly popularized phenomena of citizen journalism. Officer Daniel Pantaleo's deathly chokehold on Eric Garner was captured by a civilian bystander on film and made nationwide news soon after (Brown, 2015, p. 299). Hall, Hall, and Perry (2016) documented the top 20 most publicized police killings of unarmed black civilians between 1999 and 2015. Ninety percent of the reported top 20 most publicized police killings occurred after 2010, illustrating the recent surge in surveillance of police (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016).

Camera phones and social media have become increasingly accessible, and "citizen journalism" has increased exponentially (Greer & McLaughlin, 2010). The ubiquity of social media discourses and the availability of camera phones have made police misconduct significantly visible (Brown, 2015, p. 293). A report by the Pew Research Center (2018, p. 1) concludes that "77 percent of American adults own a smart phone in 2018." This is a tremendous increase from the 35 percent of American smart phone owners reported just seven years earlier in 2011 (Pew Research Center, 2018), and is a testament to the popularity of easy internet and video recording access in American society. Citizens' increased access to video recording devices, like smart phones, and the opportunities awarded the public through social media to distribute their captured images of police, has contributed to policing's "new visibility" (Brown, 2015, p. 293).

Although police violence is clearly a matter of national concern, researchers have yet to study police identity in connection with such publicized inequality. Current scholarship analyzing the impact of media representations concentrates primarily on the

perceptions of citizens (Dowler & Zarilski, 2007; Graziano, Schuck, & Martin, 2010; Jefferis et al., 1997; Thompson & Lee, 2004; Wu, 2010). Media's role in policing is not fully understood because scholarship remains incomplete. Little research has focused on media representations' impact on law enforcement officers (Brown, 2015). A greater understanding of the perceptions of officers is important for public safety, because officers act and interpret circumstances in accordance with their perceptions of reality. Officers have the power and discretion to determine how laws are enforced, and their conceptual framework informs their value judgments and actions.

While the occupational identity of law enforcement officers may appear rather stable, police identity “emerges and is reproduced through social interaction” (Cooley, 1998; Wharton, 2012, p. 86). The contextual shift of increased public surveillance and scrutiny may have significant influence over the expression of police identity, but this influence has yet to be explored (Wharton, 2012). This qualitative study closes this gap in research by examining how police socially construct the meaning of police work during a time of increased internet and media surveillance, and will contribute to the theoretical conversation on media's influence on policing. In particular, this study addresses the following questions: “How do patrolling officers think about and experience their jobs at this particular historical juncture of increased internet and media exposure?” and “How does the mass exposure and scrutiny of police violence shape police perceptions of their work and impact their work identity?” Face to face semi-structured interviews and interpretive research methods were used to uncover how eighteen current Bay Area patrolling officers construct their realities.

Literature Review

To have a clearer understanding of this study's research, it is important to first obtain background knowledge on: current publicized conflict between police and people of color (black populations in particular), the socialization process in which law enforcement officers develop a collective identity, and social interaction's influence over the construction and reconstruction of the self.

Current Racial Climate and Policing's "New" Visibility

First, an understanding of the normative order and social context in which officers are currently constructing their realities is essential. The current social order is defined in part by substantial racial discrimination in policing (Alexander, 2010; Brooms & Armon, 2016; Harris, 1999; Nordberg, Crawford, Praetorius, & Hatcher, 2016). The persistence of racial discrimination is confirmed by recent data on police use of force (Beer, 2018). The black community continues to be disproportionately targeted and victimized by police efforts (Bolton & Feagin, 2004). Relative to the general population, black people are over-represented among police killings "under all circumstances" (Beer, 2018). For instance, while blacks made up only 13 percent of the general population in 2015, they represented 26 percent of those killed by police (Beer, 2018). Black people were victims of lethal force at twice the rate of their population. The overrepresentation of black deaths at the hands of officers prompted a nationwide movement called Black Lives Matter (Black Lives Matter, 2013). Black Lives Matter is a unified voice for those killed by police, especially unarmed victims. This activist group has created a "culture of resistance," and uses mass media (news and social media especially) to challenge racial

oppression and bring global attention to racial inequality (Black Lives Matter, 2013). In 2015, 14.7 percent of black people killed by police were unarmed (Beer, 2018). This number dropped significantly to 7.3 percent in 2016, but rose again slightly in 2017 to 8.8 percent (Beer, 2018). Beer (2018), attributes the decline to the successes of the activist work of Black Lives Matter in pushing for police reform. While unarmed deaths have significantly declined, members of the black community are still “54 percent more likely to be unarmed when killed by police compared to whites” (Beer, 2018).

Racialized hostility between police and communities of color is by no means a new phenomenon (Bolton & Feagin, 2004). Whites have utilized their authority over police power to control black communities, maintain racial order, and safeguard white, bourgeois rule for centuries (Alexander, 2010; Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Mills, 1956). In fact, the use of “police force as the first line of defense against black ‘hordes’” is a longstanding American tradition (Bolton & Feagin, 2004, p.12). Maintaining racial segregation and subordination through means of authorized coercion and violence, unfortunately, has remained common practice for centuries (Bolton & Feagin, 2004). What *is* new, and what prompted my initial interest in this study, is the increased visibility of such inequality and conflict among the white population, who have limited interactions with police and who rely on media as a source of information about law enforcement (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011).

Research on traditional media has reported an institutional bias in favor of law enforcement (Brown, 2015; McLaughlin, 2007; Lee & McGovern, 2014). This deferential treatment helped to shield officers from critical public attention (Brown, 2015;

Thompson & Lee, 2004; Hirschfield & Simon, 2010). The concealment and infrequency of negative news about police, including unflattering footage of police use of force practices, helped to establish and perpetuate a hegemonic trust in the institution of law enforcement amongst whites (Brown, 2015; Goldsmith, 2010). Questionable police violence has only recently become frequent nationwide news (Brown, 2015; Doyle, 2003). George Holliday's video recording in 1991 of Los Angeles Police assaulting Rodney King inspired a massive rebellion and transformed America's understanding of police practices (Brown, 2015). More recently, in late 2014, a myriad of police killings of unarmed black men made national news. After becoming bombarded by horrific images of police misconduct, the public expressed interest in police practices and stressed a need for police oversight (Brown, 2015).

Video devices, like the camcorder used by Holliday to record the assault on King and the cellphone used to record the deathly chokehold on Eric Garner, are becoming increasingly compact, affordable, and accessible to the general public (Brown, 2015, p. 297). This new surge in technology has enabled a newly awakened public to document police malpractice and disseminate violent footage of illegitimate police-civilian contacts to extensive audiences. This practice, known as citizen journalism, has made black resistance increasingly visible and has begun to undermine the rosy narratives typical of the past (Brown, 2015; Lawrence, 2000; Hirschfield & Simon, 2010). Today, video recordings of controversial police use of force practices have "become an almost daily occurrence in one location or another across the United States" (Brown, 2015, p. 299). Black Lives Matter protests have been broadcasted on national news stations and images

of police malpractice (documented by citizens and news outlets) “go viral” in a matter of minutes. The prevalence of public surveillance of officers, especially concerning their use of force practices, is quantifiably illustrated in the extensive number of videos uploaded to YouTube, a popular video sharing website. A simple search of “police brutality” on the website results in 1.28 million videos, almost four times the amount of videos resulting from the same search just three years ago (Brown, 2015). Researchers have argued that the vastly privileged perspective of police in media has been replaced with greater contention and criticism (Brown, 2015; Doyle, 2006; Greer & McLaughlin, 2010; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016; Reiner, 2010). Officers who breach their “social contract” to “protect and serve” by using excessive or unnecessary force undermine police legitimacy (Ariel, Farrar, & Sutherland, 2014, p. 512). The visibility of such violations force officers to confront systemic issues embedded within law enforcement. This study explores how this contemporary social context forms the backdrop for current patrolling officers’ experiences and the collective role they play in American society (Mills, 1956).

Law Enforcement Socialization

Police academies socialize officers into their occupational roles in American society. Scholars analyzing police identity tend to focus on the initial development of police identities in these institutions (Conti, 2009; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2014; Van Maanen, 1973). Aside from equipping recruits with the values, attitudes, responsibilities, and expectations associated with the profession, sociologists argue academies also initiate the development of a collective law enforcement identity (Charon, 1998; Conti, 2009; Hall,

Hall, & Perry, 2014; Van Maanen, 1973). Relationships between officers are often characterized by an intense loyalty and emotional bond atypical amongst standard workplaces in America (Crank, 2015; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2014). Sociologists argue, it is during this initial socialization process that officers begin to develop a high collective identity, and strangers become “family” (Conti, 2009; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2014; Goffman, 1959; Van Maanen, 1973).

Once a civilian decides to begin the process of becoming a patrolling officer, he or she is tasked with a series of obligations. Interviews, lie detector tests, written tests, health examinations, and psychiatric evaluations are some of the tasks required of civilians in pursuit of the badge. Applicants are expected to be accessible throughout the application process. An applicant’s commitment is called into question if he or she fails to meet these standards of availability. This year-long application process serves to impress the incoming officers with their admittance into an “elite” organization and begins unifying strangers into a tightknit community (Crank, 2015; Goffman, 1959; Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016; Van Maanen, 1973).

Immediately after being accepted into the academy, recruit cohesion is strengthened through mechanical solidarity (Durkheim, 1893). Mechanical solidarity is the sense of togetherness that develops when people share similarities in their work, experiences, customs, and values (Durkheim, 1893). Recruits are bonded by their sameness. Elements of the recruits’ individual identities are stripped as they are made to uphold communal standards (Goffman, 1959). Recruits learn to be referred to by last name. Their hair must be shaven. Their facial hair must be nonexistent; and their matching

uniforms must be kept in pristine condition at all times. Recruits also learn coded language that allows them to covertly communicate with other law enforcement personnel. Symbolic language and uniform appearance help police distinguish themselves from other members of American society and assist in solidifying members of law enforcement into a collective that supersedes many individual differences (Crank, 2015; Goffman, 1959). Cohesion is also maintained through similar values, experiences, morals, and a collective ideology (Durkheim, 1893). For example, a collective ideology of family, where members think of each other as brothers and sisters, helps maintain a collective consciousness (Durkheim, 1893; Van Maanen, 1973).

The “in-the same-boat” collective consciousness of trainees (Van Maanen, 1973) is also strengthened during academy training when the group collectively endures a harsh set of experiences (Goffman, 1959; Hall, Hall, and Perry 2016). The lives of trainees are subjected to the academy’s tight schedules and formal organization, and trainees are required to cooperate in team performances (Goffman, 1959). As a group, recruits experience the academy’s authoritative pedagogy and its demand for absolute obedience, rigorous physical training, and ritualistic detail (Conti, 2009; Goffman, 1959; Van Maanen, 1973). Training officers also contribute to the group’s solidarity with their active use of aggregate rewards and punishments and interclass competition (Van Maanen, 1973). Simultaneously, each teammate is forced to rely on the other in a bond of reciprocal dependency (Goffman, 1959). Academy dropouts, although unfortunate, also help solidify the group’s collective identity and reaffirms the notion that “not everyone is cut out to be an officer” (Van Maanen, 1973). Understanding the process in

which law enforcement officers initially become socialized into their occupational identities is important for this study, because it provides a foundation from which to understand officers' responses to shifting environmental conditions. While preliminary socialization is important, symbolic interactionists remind us that identities are subject to change (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 1988; Cooley, 1998; Du Bois, 1909).

Identity Formation and Reformation

Cooley (1998) and Goffman (1959) argue society is omnipresent in the the development and modification of the self. Social interaction is the source of social identities (Charon, 1988). An individual learns who he or she is through interaction with the outside world (Cooley, 1998). For example, symbolic interactionists argue contact with mass media significantly shapes how individuals view themselves and others (Blumer, 1969; Cooley, 1998; Du Bois, 1909).

Cooley's (1998) theory, the Looking Glass Self, has been influential in understanding the process in which one reflects on social interactions to construct and reconstruct the self. In his theory, Cooley (1998) argues that individuals first imagine how they appear to others. An individual then uses social interactions to determine how he or she is evaluated by others (Cooley, 1998; Mead, 1934). The interpretations made by the individual, regardless of accuracy, impact the individual's sense of self and his or her consequent behaviors (Cooley, 1998; Blumer, 1969; Du Bois, 1909). Individuals do not behave according to objective truth, but according to subjective interpretations of reality (Blumer, 1969).

This interpretive process, in which reality is constructed, is constant, ongoing, and adaptive (Blumer, 1969; Cooley, 1998). An individual's self concept is constantly adjusting to new social experiences and social definitions encountered every day of his or her life (Charon, 1988, p. 73). The relational and historically evolving nature of social identities makes the ongoing analysis of police imperative. The self concept of officers is constantly adjusting to new social experiences and shifting cultural, social, and political contexts. The new visibility of policing and current public discourse surrounding police violence represent contextual shifts in the social milieu experienced by police officers. An analysis of how officers socially construct their reality in today's historical juncture is an important next step in scholarship. This research explores the potential impact of increased media surveillance on the ways in which officers think about and experience their law enforcement identities.

Methodology

Previous research on media's influence on policing varies in data collection methods. Sociologists interested in studying participants' attitudes collect data using quantitative survey questionnaires and experiments (Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Graziano, Schuck, & Martin, 2010; Jefferis, Kaminski, Holmes, & Hanley, 1997; Thompson & Lee, 2004; Wu, 2010), while sociologists interested in the self-conceptions and experiences of participants collect their data using qualitative interviews (Brown, 2015; Lee & McGovern, 2014). This project was not constructed using ontological assumptions that the world is quantifiably divisible, but instead assumes a fluid and socially constructed empirical world (Blumer, 1969; Thomas, 2013). Qualitative data enables a thorough exploration of the implications of policing's new visibility otherwise unreachable with quantitative data (Blumer, 1969; Brown, 2015, p. 301). "The world of reality" only exists in human experience, so it is imperative to recognize how individuals interpret, comprehend, and experience the world (Blumer, 1969; Garner & Hancock, 2014; Goffman, 1959). Police narratives provide rich description and a more complete understanding of officers' socially constructed realities during a time of dense police surveillance. Such qualitative data allows officers' voices to be heard and unveils their "mental maps," or ways in which they interpret and form ideas around their work-related experiences (Thomas, 2013). For these reasons, I used interpretive qualitative methodology, specifically face to face semi-structured interviews, to uncover the ways in which eighteen officers create meaning and experience their jobs in a contentious social environment (Luker, 2008).

Sample and Access

Eighteen participants were recruited for this study. I used snowball sampling to recruit eight interviewees from within interlocking law enforcement social networks (Warren & Karner, 2015, p. 136). The other ten participants were recruited through their police departments. Both samples were limited to current Bay Area patrolling officers, corporals, and sergeants between the ages of 18 and 65.

Studying current patrolling officers is critical for addressing the impact of policing's new visibility (Brown, 2015, p. 293). The occupational perspectives of police officers, corporals, and sergeants are particularly rich, because they are the front-line officers who engage regularly with the public, and are often the officers featured in highly publicized media stories. These officers are therefore more data dense than correctional officers, for example (Brown, 2015). Participants for this study spent an average of seven hours in the public sphere during each shift, interacting and responding to calls for service in their community. The extensive time spent performing their duties before a public audience makes these officers most susceptible to being featured in "viral" videos and more likely to become tomorrow's headliners (Brown, 2015). In fact, much like Brown's (2015) research on front-line officers, every participant in this study described experiences of being filmed by civilians in either close or distant proximity, and a couple of officers explained their experiences being featured in videos posted on the internet. A focus on current patrolling officers allowed for the most efficient exploration of the micro-sociological issues and the impact of media exposure on policing (Brown, 2015; McLaughlin, 2007).

I gained access to eight of my participants using a snowball sample technique. A personal contact I have in law enforcement initiated the sample collection. This personal contact vouched for my legitimacy as a researcher and explained my research objectives to potential participants. When officers showed interest in participating, I received their contact information and contacted them. I emphasized the growing need to give officers a voice in research and the confidentiality of my project during our phone conversations. Additional contacts were then received as participating officers were asked to give references.

I used an alternative, more systematic method of sampling to acquire ten additional participants. An alphabetically ordered list was composed of all Bay Area police departments. A random number generator was used to choose fifteen police departments to contact from the list. Each department had the same chance of being selected, and each randomly selected department was only contacted once. I waited a week before repeating the process and randomly selected an additional fifteen departments. A total of thirty Bay Area police departments were called in hopes of gaining willing participants (see Appendix A for recruiting script). Some departments requested information be sent via email to forward to potentially interested officers. In these cases, I sent my consent form (see Appendix B) and a brief explanation of my research. Ultimately, four departments connected me to potential participants, scheduling multiple interviews over the course of a day.

Gaining access to participants through the departments' higher administration comes with some methodological implications. If officers are told about the research project

from higher administration, the project gains legitimacy in the eyes of participants; however, participants may also feel pressured to participate since the request came up the chain of command. I took ethical precautions to ensure voluntary participation and to protect participants from any potential harm. I received written informed consent from each participant to ensure there was no deception or coercion (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). Each participant received a consent form that explicitly and clearly stated the purpose of the study, the procedures the participants would undergo, the potential risks, the potential benefits, the steps taken to ensure confidentiality, the participants rights, and contact information for myself and for the SJSU Office of Graduate Studies and Research (see Appendix B). Each participant received a copy of the consent form to keep for their own records.

After reading the consent form, participants understood this research project seeks to understand how police think about and experience their work (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). To protect participants from emotional discomfort and to help eliminate coercion, participants were reminded of the confidential and voluntary nature of the project verbally before undergoing each interview (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). Participants were told that they do not have to answer any question that may cause them discomfort and could still remain in the study. They were encouraged to ask questions of clarification throughout the process and understood they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The consent form also explicitly informed each volunteer participant all of what was expected of them. For instance, they were informed that the interview would be audio recorded and would take about an hour to complete.

Participants were told what types of questions would be asked during the interview, including questions about their personal backgrounds, job experiences, interactions with civilians, and exposure to media representations of officers.

The consent form also explicitly described the steps taken to protect participants from any breach of privacy. Personal names, department affiliations, and contact information of my interview participants were collected, but this information will not be reported and is kept separately from any transcripts and audio recordings. I maintained confidentiality by replacing the participants' names with coded numbers in transcripts. Pseudonyms were later allocated to each coded number. Real names will be excluded in any resulting publications or presentations (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). Audio recordings and transcripts are kept on my personal password-protected computer accessible only to me (Thomas, 2013). Data has been used only for the purpose of this study and will not be shared (Thomas, 2013). Data will be destroyed a year after all interviews are transcribed (Thomas, 2013).

Ultimately, eighteen Bay Area law enforcement officers participated in this study.¹ All of the interviewees self identified as male in the snowball sample, and all but one identified as male in the department initiated sample. The snowball sample consisted only of police officers. The department initiated sample included four officers, three corporals, and three sergeants. The ages of participants ranged from 25 to 64. The average age in the snowball sample was 36. Thirty-eight was the average age of

¹ Nineteen participants were interviewed for the purpose of this study. One interviewee, however withdrew from the study shortly after the interview was conducted. This interviewee was removed from the study.

participants of the department initiated sample. Four of the participants in the snowball sample self identified as “White,” three as “Hispanic,” and one as “African.” Seven of the participants in the department sample self identified as “White,” two as a mix of “White and Asian,” and one as “Pacific Islander and Other Asian.” The participants were employed by nine different California Bay Area police departments. The populations of the cities in which the departments are located vary in size. The average city population was 62,000. The smallest city populated 29,505, and the largest populated 1.03 million. Experience amongst officers also varied. The least experienced officer had a year of experience, and the most experienced officer worked in law enforcement for 40 years. Participants in the snowball sample had an average of 10 years of experience, and participants in the department initiated sample had an average of 15 years of experience as officers.

Data Collection

Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews for several reasons. First, semi-structured interviews helped foster the exploratory nature of my research (Blumer, 1969). The format of semi-structured interviews allowed me to sharpen my broad focus of inquiry as empirical data was collected (Blumer, 1969). Semi-structured interviews ensured topics of interest would be covered and simultaneously permitted participants to control the direction of the interview (Bolton & Feagin, 2004). The flexibility afforded by semi-structured interviews helped generate a somewhat natural conversation between respondents and I. The order of questions, for example, were rearranged when necessary to keep a logical flow during the interviews (Thomas, 2013). This interview format

allowed respondents to conceptualize and frame their experiences in their own terms (Bolton & Feagin, 2004). According to Fontana and Frey (1994, p. 371), conversational interviewing allows participants “to express personal feelings, and therefore presents a more realistic picture than can be uncovered using traditional interview methods.” The conversational interviews elicited narratives from law enforcement officials that were illustrative of their perceptions and of the meanings they give to their work experiences (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). The interview format offered participants the freedom to emphasize aspects of their careers they felt were significant.

Open ended questions characteristic of interviews allowed law enforcement officials to answer questions with greater specificity than with close ended questions often characteristic of survey questionnaires (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). The face-to-face contact afforded by semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe verbally and non verbally to encourage participants to share details and to ensure quality data was collected (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). Researchers also explain how the physical presence of an interviewer can be used to help equalize power dynamics between researcher and participant (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Thomas, 2013). For example, I presented myself as an interested listener and nonjudgmental professional by dressing in business casual clothing and by being aware of my nonverbal and verbal language throughout the interview. Lastly, semi-structured interviews were useful because they provided me with enough structure to compare the answers of law enforcement officials to one another and the flexibility to ask about topics that I did not originally include in the interview guide (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Luker, 2008; Warren & Karner, 2015).

Law enforcement officials were asked to participate in interviews that would last about an hour. The interviews, on average, lasted an hour and six minutes. Interviews took place at a time and location of each participants choosing. The officers were afforded the choice of location in an attempt to further equalize power and to maximize each respondent's physical and emotional comfort (Warren & Karner, 2015).

Participants recruited through snowball sampling chose to be interviewed in a variety of settings including their home, work space, and coffee shops they found comfortable and familiar. Participants recruited through departments all chose to be interviewed at their police departments. These interviews took place in interview rooms and office spaces. I arrived fifteen minutes before the prearranged times to set up at the designated locations (Warren & Karner, 2015).

A digital voice recorder helped document the interviews once written consent was received. Audio recordings were helpful in maintaining accurate accounts of interviews for interpretive research (Thomas, 2013). Participants were also given a simple demographic face sheet to complete as the recording device was set up (Warren & Karner, 2015). The face sheet allowed the officers to self report their gender, age, race/ethnicity, and ranking (see Appendix C). Each face sheet was marked by a coded number that match the coded number used to identify the same respondent's audiotape recording and their subsequent transcript (Warren & Karner, 2015). Face sheets and signed consent forms are contained in a locked drawer, and interview data is kept in a password protected computer.

The formal interviews began once all questions and concerns were addressed. The interview questions were formulated around two main research questions: How do police officers think about and experience their jobs at this particular historical juncture of increased internet and media exposure? and How does the mass exposure and scrutiny of police violence shape police perceptions of their work and impact their work identity? “Why” questions were avoided when constructing the interview guide because they have been found to provoke defensive responses and pressure respondents to deliver “right answers” (Becker, 1998). The interview guide included 16 guiding questions (see Appendix D). The open-ended format of the interview guide offered participants some freedom to guide the interview and to uncover topics officers found significant. The interviews started with a general discussion of the participants’ careers. For example, officers were asked to explain how they “got into law enforcement,” and were asked to describe their “roles as officers.” Starting with general questions helped develop a level of rapport before more potentially sensitive questions were asked (Warren & Karner, 2015). For example, after asking general career questions I asked officers to “Tell me about one of the worst days on the job,” and to “Tell me about [their] relationship with media representations of officers.” The interviews ended with, “What is something I didn’t ask that you want to tell me about?,” to ensure extensive and complete accounts of the officers’ thoughts and experiences.

Once an interview was completed, I thanked my participant, dismissed myself, and took notes very soon afterwards on the context of the interview. These notes included details of the location of the interview, the respondent’s attire, and any other notable

elements of the interview not captured by audio recording (Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). These notes were taken after the interview, rather than during, so participants felt as comfortable as possible throughout the interview.

In addition to my formal interviews, I participated in a ride-along at a local police department on December 7, 2017. I accompanied an officer on his night shift from 3:00 pm to 1:00 am. I attended this ride-along in the middle of my interviewing process. During this ethnographic experience, I informally interviewed the officer throughout his shift and observed the procedures I heard many officers describe during our formal interviews (Warren & Karner, 2015). No visual or audio recordings were taken during this ride-along. Quotes from the shadowed officer have not been included in the findings, although, during our conversations, he often reiterated many of the thoughts and experiences of those who were included. The purpose of the ride-along was to receive a contextual understanding of the experiences officers described during their formal interviews (Warren & Karner, 2015). Many officers had suggested I attend a ride-along because they believed the shadowing experience would give me a more complete understanding of their careers. The knowledge I acquired through my ride-along experience helped me more accurately describe and analyze the day-to-day experiences of officers.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory was used during the analytic process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I analyzed the thoughts and experiences of Bay Area patrolling officers by looking for patterned understandings surrounding the profession. I began my analysis and theory

development with becoming intimately familiar with the transcripts from my interviews (Warren & Karner, 2015). Each element of my data was compared to one another again and again (Thomas, 2013). Constant comparison allowed for open coding and memo writing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Thomas, 2013). Once coded, a codebook of the conceptual categories was developed with each code's boundaries explicitly classified by delineating what data fit into which code (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005; Luker, 2008; Thomas, 2013). These codes were clustered into recognizable themes that captured and summarized the data (Luker, 2008; Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). I mapped out the interconnections of these emergent themes in order to build a theoretical story (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005; Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). I selected multiple quotes from my transcripts as illustrations of the themes, and used contradictory findings to refine my developed theory (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005; Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015).

Feminist and qualitative scholars remind researchers that they have a positionality that is essential to the ways in which they interpret the world (Haraway, 1988; England, 1994; Mario, 2015; Milner, 2007). Donna Haraway (1988), for example, describes knowledge as situated, and qualitative scholars describe a need for reflexivity in research (England, 1994; Mario, 2015; Milner, 2007). These scholars argue knowledge is impacted by the social locations of researchers producing information (Haraway, 1988; England, 1994; Mario, 2015; Milner, 2007). An explanation of my social position, and the ways in which my positionality may have contributed to my research is therefore warranted to ensure transparency (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005; Thomas, 2013).

Feminist scholars have found the polarization of “insider” and “outsider” status problematic in research (Merriam et al., 2001; Rabe, 2003). These scholars argue researchers often do not fit neatly into either category (Merriam et al., 2001; Rabe, 2003). The status of “insider” and “outsider” is fluid, and I shifted between the different roles associated with being an insider and outsider throughout my research process (Merriam et al., 2001; Rabe, 2003). For instance, while I share my participants middle class status, English language, and Bay Area locality, my gender made me an outsider with my primarily male group of respondents. I am also younger than all of my participants and have a higher level of education than most of them. I hold a white racial status which places me as a racial outsider to at least some of my participants who hold other racial identities. While I have no personal experience as a law enforcement officer, my significant other is just beginning his journey towards becoming a patrolling officer. He is Latino, and it is our conversations about law enforcement and media representations of officers that prompted my interest in this research project.

The class, language, and regional commonalities I share with my participants allowed for easy communication and a clearer understanding of their social references throughout my interviews (Rabe, 2003). These commonalities may have put my participants more at ease, and increased their willingness to talk to me about their experiences. Warren and Karner (2015) explain how respondents with lower levels of education may be reluctant to speak with a perceived figure of authority. In an attempt to equalize power dynamics, I used everyday language as apposed to academic jargon throughout my interviews. This helped create a conversational atmosphere. My younger age may have also helped make

me seem less authoritative and more approachable. Although being a woman inevitably means I do not have insight into being a man (as the majority of my participants were men), I believe being a woman may have benefited me in my research. My gendered status may have helped me come across as relatively unthreatening and elicited more responses centered around my participants' emotions than might have occurred with a male interviewer (Rabe, 2003). My racial status may have helped my white respondents feel less defensive when speaking about media representations, but may simultaneously have placed my respondents of color in an unequal power dynamic. Respondents of color answered my interview questions with a level of depth that suggest my efforts towards building rapport were successful (Bolton & Feagin, 2004).

Lastly, I conducted this inquiry with some former knowledge about law enforcement due to exposure to the literature and to my personal contacts with law enforcement officials. While some will argue that this knowledge made me less "objective," I share Burawoy's (1998) belief that neutrality in social research is an unfeasible feat. The limited information I had about law enforcement prompted my interest in the topic and laid a foundation of common concepts and procedures present in the profession (Luker, 2008). This knowledge provided me with some understanding of law enforcement culture and helped create a more accurate representation of my case (Rabe, 2003). The limits of my prior knowledge also assisted my research. I was able to highlight what may have seemed trivial to others more submerged into law enforcement culture (Luker, 2008). Most of my participants also assumed I knew very little about law enforcement

which prompted them to elaborate when discussing common law enforcement concepts and helped elicit more descriptive narratives.

Most scholars agree that matching characteristics of respondents to interviewers is not critical to having a successful research project (Haraway, 1988; Rabe, 2003; Thomas, 2013; Warren & Karner, 2015). However, the acknowledgment of differing situated positions does stress the need for reflection of my own positionality (Rabe, 2003). My knowledge of the complexities surrounding inquiry in part helped to guard against bias and subjectivity. Constant reflection of my social location helped me develop methods to minimize power dynamics and organize an ethical research project.

Findings

My findings are separated into two main sections. The first section examines how present-day media has created social interactions that shape current police identity development. This section is organized along Cooley's (1998) theory of the Looking Glass Self. Officers in this study use their understandings of media sources to imagine how they appear to the public. They then use their interpretations of media depictions and civilian encounters to imagine how they are evaluated by the public. This ultimately leads participants in this study to perceive threats to their law enforcement identity. The second section examines the adaptive responses officers in this study use to combat the perceived threats: strengthening their collective identity, separating their collective and individual identities, questioning their collective identity, and preserving their collective identity. This section is organized around Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma and impression management. Based on these findings, possible implications are discussed.

Media Context Shaping Identity Development Using Cooley

Cooley's (1998) theory, the Looking Glass Self, explains the process in which one reflects on social interactions to construct and reconstruct one's identity. Organized around Cooley's (1998) theory, this section describes how an officer's self concept, which is first initiated in the police academy, is impacted by the recent shift of increased public surveillance and scrutiny. Officers first imagine how they appear to others. Then, officers use social interactions to determine how they are evaluated by the public, and lastly, the interpretations of officers, regardless of accuracy, lead them to perceive their law enforcement identity as threatened (Cooley, 1998; Blumer, 1969; Du Bois, 1909).

Imagining how they appear to the public. Most of the officers interviewed concurred that the public are uninformed about law enforcement. Officers in this study believed the public are uninformed about law enforcement, because they imagine the public receives much of their information from “inaccurate” depictions produced by the media. Abe², a white patrolling officer with ten years of law enforcement experience, perfectly sums up the common understanding of an uninformed public when he said: “They don’t know what police officers do. They only know what we do from what they see in the news, on the internet. You know, what they read.” Similar to respondents like Abe, officers nationwide reported a gap between the knowledge of the public and the realities of police work. Eighty-six percent of American officers declare that the public lacks an understanding of the risks and challenges faced by police on the job (Pew Center Research, 2017).

Additionally, participants in this study pointed to the media as the source of such disparity. In conjunction with Wu (2010, p. 773), who found “frequent exposure to news of incidents of police misconduct” to have “the most notable and consistent” negative effects on satisfaction with police, participants in this study described the media as a persuasive force with great power over public opinion. Hank, a Japanese and white veteran sergeant, reflected on current media representations of police:

I think media can kind of skew the public’s perception of law enforcement, and I think that plays a big role. What people see, what people read, and if all you’re reading is negative, negative, negative, negative on something, you’re probably going to have a negative perception of it regardless. You know, if you’re not hearing anything positive...Even though there is positives. They happen all the

² Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of research participants.

time. You just don't hear about it, you know? So, I think yeah, that can have a negative impact on the way people perceive law enforcement.

It is clear, from this and other interviews, that media play a large role in the meaning that officers attach to the public's perception of them. During their interviews, officers discussed various types of media sources, but spent considerably more time reflecting on news and social media's representations of officers.

Participants expressed strong feelings about the ways in which they believe they are represented through these outlets. Officers view the public as uninformed about law enforcement, because officers believe most of the public's information is derived from media representations that police describe as "negative," "unfair," "one-sided," "incomplete," "inaccurate," "sensationalized," and "money/rating motivated."

Participants in this study were not alone in their belief that police are generally represented unfairly in the media. Forty-three percent of officers nationwide strongly agreed with this understanding (Pew Center Research, 2017).

When participants were asked to recall a time in which law enforcement was *unfairly* represented in the media, most officers did not describe specific incidences, but instead described the media in generalities. Officers quickly responded to this question, and many provided several examples throughout the interview. For example, Elliot, a white officer with seven years of experience, responded by saying:

I think the media reporting on the negative or on knee jerk reactions and then not following up on the reporting and not reporting fair and accurate representations of what occurred, I think that's a disservice... So, news in my opinion should be news. It should be reported about things that are happening, things that are occurring, and it shouldn't show bias. It should just show, report on things as they are. You know, if an initial report comes out that this officer shot this unarmed black man, okay report on that. But, you know, don't put opinions on

that. Don't show bias. But, then, when evidence comes out different later, if it does, report on that too. You know, just be consistent and report all things. And, I think in the end it'll work out. But I don't think the media does that because it's not exciting and it doesn't raise people's excitement.

Instead of understanding police violence in the media as a call for action, interviewed officers, like Elliot, reflect on the ways they believe media outlets “inaccurately” represent officers and “sensationalize” news.³ Elliot brings up a hypothetical news story of an officer shooting an unarmed black man. He does this not to discuss systemic racism or to discuss the injustice of such a shooting, but to explain the ways in which media places bias on “individual occurrences.”

Officers, like Elliot, discussed ways in which the media represented police “unfairly” with ease. However, when participants were asked to recall a time in which law enforcement was *fairly* represented in the media, the question was often met with surprised laughter, speechlessness, or dumbfounded questions like, “I’m sorry, fairly?”, as if they could not believe what they had just heard. These stunned reactions indicate that officers do not understand the myriad of police killings recently publicized in the media as true reflections of systemic prejudice, but as sensationalized incidents. Interviewed officers cite “biased” media outlets, not institutionalized racism, as the source of an uninformed public and the culprits of fragmented police-civilian relationships. It is based on these understandings that officers imagine how they are evaluated by the public.

³ Police may, or may not, be empirically supported in their position, yet this perspective nonetheless impacts how officers construct their own identities.

Imagining how they are evaluated. Police officers understand the general public to be reliant on media as a source of information about law enforcement, yet research says reliance on media varies by race (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011). Consumption of crime-related media was found to influence whites' confidence in police, but had no impact on blacks or Latinos who rely more on personal experiences (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011). The officers in this study did not disaggregate the opinions of black people and other minorities (who have greater rates of contact with police) from whites in their generalizations of "public opinion." Instead, officers used their perceptions to construct a reality in which they believed the general public used media as the key source of police evaluation.

The public's perceived reliance on media, although not supported by social science data, lead officers to believe there is an overall negative perception of law enforcement officers (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011). In fact, most officers explained their understandings of a generally negative public perception of law enforcement early into their interviews. For example, after being asked what she dislikes about her job as an officer, Tanya (a Pacific Islander and other Asian, 15-year veteran corporal) expressed her dislike for what she perceives to be a general aversion to law enforcement:

More recently, I don't like the way law enforcement is seen. 'Cause, I understand that there are times where we're not viewed in the right light, and rightly so. But, I also understand that that's just a blanketed perception that's being driven right now.

In this statement, Tanya references the recent "light" that has been shown on law enforcement, and expresses her understanding of a "recent" shift towards criticism of officers. Although she avoids outright discussing police violence against black men,

being that she was interviewed on December 20, 2017, it is likely these are the images she is referencing in her quote. She, like the majority of the officers interviewed, recognizes the increased visibility of policing, but does not recognize the violence of officers in the media as reflective of an institutional problem. Instead, she is frustrated by what she describes as a “blanketed” negative public perception of officers. Her use of “we” indicates she understands the negative publicity to be an attack on the collective law enforcement identity, rather than on the institution.

Officers used their perceived notions about media’s influence on the general public, to develop an understanding of how the public evaluates officers as a collective group. These notions lead officers to believe they are seen “negatively,” and viewed by the public as “racist,” “aggressive,” “untrustworthy,” and “inhuman.” This was particularly apparent when conversations around surveillance arose. For instance, when white officer Abe was discussing his experiences being recorded by civilians, he simultaneously expressed his understanding of being judged as untrustworthy, racist, and potentially violent:

People feel that if they see me talking to a minority or someone from another race, they automatically assume I’m doing something to violate their civil rights. You know, it could be that they’re the victim. You know, they called. The person I’m talking to could be the one who called us for help, and you got this guy across the street, or ten feet away from me, video recording what’s going on.

Abe makes the connection between the “incidents” he thinks the public has seen in the media (white officers killing black men) and his personal experience of being recorded by a stranger, to come to understand how he is viewed by the public. This connection

leads him to believe that once he dons the uniform, he is perceived as biased, corrupt, and dangerous.

Even vicarious experiences with the public can carry great meaning for officers. For example, Hank (a Japanese and White veteran sergeant) uses his children's experiences to understand how the public has come to see officers as a racist collective:

It's even happened with my kids at school too, you know. When their classmates find out that I'm a police officer and one of the kids maybe makes a comment. You know, "your dad doesn't like certain people."

The police officers under study reference their personal and vicarious experiences with the public to inform their understandings of negative public perceptions.

These experiences lead officers to interpret the public, not as allies in a collective fight against crime, but as critical members of an opposing team.

Despite officers cautious and, often times, critical view of news media and citizen journalism, officers in this study showed an appreciation for body cameras as surveillance tools. Every interviewee confirmed that their department required the use of body cameras, and all officers described enjoying the transparency afforded by the cameras. The appreciation of body cameras found amongst respondents in this study supports Lyon's (2007, p. 56) finding that most Western front-line officers operate, and appreciate operating, within "techno-social circumstances." Interviewed officers considered the body camera a useful "tool" to complete the otherwise "incomplete" representations they said often make headlines. Miles, a white rookie officer, summarized this sentiment well when he said, "I think [body cameras] are going to give a little better of a full story, versus the little partial story that we often get." The approval

of body cameras expressed by the participants in this study is reflective of the findings of the Pew Research Center (2017) who also found the majority of officers in favor of body cameras (66 percent).⁴

Although officers unanimously expressed their appreciation for body cameras, and spoke of them with overall fondness, they also reflected on what they believed to be the tool's downfalls. Officers used an individualistic perspective when discussing body cameras' pitfalls. For example, officers expressed their understanding of body cams as a response to the public and administration's distrust of officers. They also discussed how the misuse of a body camera could further erode the trust in individual officers who fail to turn the camera on in dire situations. When Elliot, a white officer with seven years of experience, was expressing how he felt about body cameras, he said:

In the past, if a police officer got on the stand in court and testified about something happening, people took that as fact. But now, and even the DA will tell us that if it's not on video it didn't happen... To be told it didn't happen is kind of, pretty discouraging. Makes you feel like, you know, your integrity doesn't matter, or doesn't, you know, or you don't have it and somebody's assuming you don't have it.

Again, "public opinion" is used interchangeably with what research demonstrates to be a white public perception (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011). Elliot reflects on "the past" to describe how "people" have shifted away from a blind trust of police integrity, but the real shift has been among the white middle class segment of society, whose privileged status has historically shielded them from the brutality of the justice system (Callanan &

⁴ It should be mentioned that approval of body cameras is significantly higher amongst the general public (93 percent) than amongst officers (66 percent) (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Rosenberger, 2011). Unlike members of the black community, who have disproportionately been victims of police violence, whites are only recently being exposed to the injustices of the the justice system via media images (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011).

Evidence provided by officers historically carried pronounced weight. Primarily white juries, attorneys, and judges relied on officer's accounts for crucial details including information about crime scenes and the demeanor of suspects (Ariel, Farrer, & Sutherland, 2014). In alignment with Elliot's account above, Ariel, Farrer, and Sutherland (2014) describe a recent shift in courtrooms with less reliance placed on officer testimonies, and greater reliance placed on digital evidence. This shift may be viewed as a positive and democratic change in the justice system, however Ariel, Farrer, and Sutherland argue the shift "has indirect but important costs on policing" (2014, p. 529). Elliot reflects on what he believes to be the pitfalls of an increased reliance on technology. His account reflects the common understanding amongst interviewed police that officers are now seen as "guilty until proven innocent" by the general public. Because the public places so much weight on video evidence, officers believe that a lack of such evidence results in others deeming them as untrustworthy and corrupt. Though, Elliot does not mention law enforcement administration in his narrative, multiple officers discussed how distrust extends to their superiors who "wouldn't have [their] back even if [they] were innocent." Officers interpret a lack of support and trust as arising from both the public and higher administration. This interpretation isolates officers, and contributes to their construction of a threatened identity.

Officers of color imagined being evaluated much the same way as white officers did. However, in addition to being seen as racist, aggressive, untrustworthy, and inhuman, officers of color also believed they were seen as sellouts of their own community. While answering a question regarding police training, Hispanic officer, Frank, veers off topic to reflect on the experiences of officers of color:

You got cops out there, especially the cops of African American descent going out to a call and you see, you know, people telling ‘em “you’re a traitor. You sell out your race.”

Officers of color do not believe they are immune from negative public discourse. On the contrary, they too believe they are stereotyped by the public. The only reported difference between them and their fellow white officers during this study, was that officers of color carry the extra burden of being seen as traitors.

Bolton and Feagin’s (2004) qualitative research with black officers reveals a similar trend. Black officers in their study reported that they were called “sell outs” by black civilians in communities they patrolled. Bolton and Feagin (2004) describe how black officers actively work to make policing fairer while facing the burden of being perceived as “the enemy” by members of black communities. Much like Bolton and Feagin’s study, officers of color in this study expressed a greater level of understanding of public distrust based on vicarious and personal experiences with law enforcement. For example, Bill, a new African officer, expresses his understanding of public frustration in the following passage:

So, for there to be frustration in this day and age, I’m not surprised. I was at that point before. I understand it. Do I necessarily agree with some of the actions taken to combat the tensions? Not necessarily. But, I don’t feel bad about people

for not necessarily having the most trust in law enforcement right now. Or vice versa.

Officers of color have an intersectional standpoint that allows them to see conflict between the police and communities of color from multiple angles (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Du Bois, 1909). While white officers often described witnessing their co-workers of color bearing the weight of the “traitor” and “sell out” labels, white officer’s understandings were limited. White officers did not understand how law enforcement’s past and present role in controlling communities of color has contributed to the apprehension held by communities of color. The imagined “past” of general police approval, continually referenced throughout my interviews, underscores a perception of reality that lacks a complete understanding of racialized complexities. People of color, unlike whites, come to understand law enforcement as a system of injustice as they learn about their oppressive histories and witness the continued suppressive treatment of their loved ones (Charon, 1998). Authorized force has long been monopolized and exercised by primarily white law enforcement agents⁵, and officers (regardless of color) are seen by communities of color as symbols of white authority (Bolton & Feagin, 2004). Consequently, communities of color are suspicious and cautious of those bearing the uniform despite the color of the officer’s skin (Bolton & Feagin, 2004).

While officers of color have a better understanding of the distrust amongst communities of color and their grievances against police, white officers are less likely to “see racism” that is currently less overt and more systemic (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The

⁵ In fact, Bolton and Feagin (2004) describe significant black representation in law enforcement as a relatively new occurrence.

discrepancy between black and white officers becomes clear when opinion polls are analyzed. The Pew Research Center (2017) found 80 percent of officers agreed no additional changes are needed to give black people equal rights with whites, despite the overwhelming evidence that says otherwise (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2000). This response, however, was largely impacted by race. Ninety- two percent of white officers claimed “our country has made the changes needed to give blacks equal rights with whites,” while 29 percent of black officers agreed with this statement (Pew Center Research, 2017). While officers of color seem to have a greater understanding of systemic racism, it is important to note that black officers are still twice as likely to agree with this statement than black civilians (12 percent). The discrepancy between black civilians and officers illustrates the strong influence of law enforcement’s collective identity (Pew Center Research, 2017, p. 1).

While some officers began their interviews describing how “lucky” they were to have supportive local communities, this local support was referred to as a luxury during a time in which they felt negatively viewed by the general population. These “lucky” participants were primarily officers patrolling suburban neighborhoods characterized by citizens with high socio-economic statuses. At the beginning of their interviews, some officers from these neighborhoods claimed to be unaffected by the “negative perceptions” towards police officers that they described as rampant in the general public. The support these participants described in their local communities were portrayed as stark contrasts from the perceptions and attitudes of the general American public. Although these officers initially claimed to be sheltered from public scrutiny, each of these officers had

no issue recollecting negative interactions. After some reflection, officers, like David (a white 40-year veteran officer), blamed the media for transferring distrust into their otherwise supportive communities:

If nobody watched the news or watched TV, we could have a bubble over the city. It would be fine. But people talk to relatives back East, and people talk to people back East, and people read Facebook and twitter, and whatever else they're doing.

This quote illustrates how officers, who initially labeled their local community as the exception to the rule, often shifted their understandings after some reflection. Officers of smaller wealthier communities described how their otherwise sheltered city had been negatively influenced by nationwide media images of officers in other parts of the country behaving “badly”:

Even people who don't necessarily view it as being all of law enforcement, it tends to over time color their opinion of the profession. It doesn't matter if it happened in Texas, or New York, or Alabama, or wherever. Everybody watches, well not everybody, but a lot of people still watch the nightly news. A lot of people read the news online. Now, social media news stories get retweeted over and over and over, or sent via Facebook over and over and over.

Officers, like Miles, a white 27-year veteran corporal, describe how easily assessable nationwide media depictions of officers in other parts of the country have inevitably altered the perceptions of his “tight knit” community, and he essentially ignores the impact police violence and corruption has on public perceptions. Those who started their interviews describing their local communities as positive and supportive, still discussed the impact of news media and the general public's perceptions on their identity.

Contentious public interactions and “negative” media representations have given officers, regardless of their Bay Area location, the perception that they are seen negatively by the general public. Officers believe they are generally understood to be

racist, aggressive, untrustworthy, inhuman, and (in the case of officers of color) sell outs. These contemporary perceptions have lead officers to develop a threatened law enforcement identity.

A perceived threatened identity. Most officers described entering law enforcement, because they saw the profession as a way in which they could “help people,” “make a difference,” and “protect and serve the community.” The incentive of “helping people” was referenced time and time again as officers described the highlights of their profession. Abe, a white patrolling officer with ten years of law enforcement experience, summarizes this consensus when he said, “That’s what I wanted to do, help people. ‘Cause there’s times when you show up to a call and you’re the best thing that person’s ever seen because you’re there to save them and help them.” Similar to many of the participants in this study, Abe placed great significance on his ability to help. Helpfulness is central to officers’ understanding of their roles.

Officers form their work identities around the idea of helping the public and serving the community. So, when officers begin to believe the public do not view police as helpful, but instead as “racist,” “aggressive,” “untrustworthy,” and “inhuman,” their law enforcement identity is threatened. The internal battle that results from a threatened identity is illustrated in Paul’s narrative:

You really have to do this job because you believe it’s the right thing to do, and you know what you’re doing is going to help. You know, whether they like you or not. Regardless of what people say, regardless of cameras getting shoved in my face, regardless of them calling me every name in the book, you know, I understand what I’m doing is right. And I understand that I’m helping people even if they don’t see it.

Paul, a Hispanic police officer with ten years of experience, emphasizes the negative opinions he perceives the public to have about law enforcement. He references “cameras getting shoved in his face” and name calling to inform his understanding of the public’s negative opinions of the profession. Paul discusses how these opinions directly contradict his understanding of being in a helpful occupation. “Helping people,” for the majority of the participants, was both a significant reason for entering into law enforcement and a motive in their continued membership in the career. However, the law enforcement identity is incredibly interlinked with the public, and the obvious disparity between perceived public opinion and personal understandings has created an increasingly vulnerable identity for officers in today’s historical juncture (Cooley, 1998; Wharton, 2012). Thus, in response to a perceived threatened identity, officers developed four main coping mechanisms.

Adaptive Response to Perceived Identity Threats Using Goffman

Goffman (1963) explains individuals actively use impression management as a method of slanting their presentations of self to influence how others see and think of them. Impression management allows officers in this study to respond to their newly perceived threatened identity by acting in ways conducive to maintaining a positive self image and avoiding social stigma (Goffman, 1963). Social stigma, according to Goffman (1963), is the disapproval and discrediting of a group (or individual) by society. The officers I studied used four coping strategies to distance themselves from potential stigma. Patrolling officers described ways in which they strengthened their collective

identity, separated their collective and individual identities, questioned their collective identity, and worked toward preserving their collective identity. These coping strategies were not mutually exclusive. Some officers described experiences that pointed to the utilization of multiple methods of impression management (Goffman, 1963).

Strengthening collective identity. Some officers described their attempts to strengthen their collective identity during times of increased exposure of police malpractice. George's narrative is reflective of officers who found themselves moving closer to their collective police identity. George, a white police officer, describes how "negative" media depictions of officers began impacting his childhood friends' perceptions of law enforcement:

I find myself, I guess, hanging out with other cops more so off duty than say my childhood friends, or my high school friends growing up, only because of the fact that, I guess, when I'm with my work friends we have a lot more to talk about, a lot more in common now because this is our life. As opposed to hanging out with my friends I grew up with who are not invested in this career like I am, and quite frankly have a much different opinion on what I do than, you know, what I think it is.

George's collective identity is threatened by his childhood friends' negative perceptions of police and the perceptions he understands to be rampant in the general public. George believes his occupational status is stigmatized by civilians; and in response, he finds himself distancing himself from his civilian identity and strengthening his bond with fellow officers who share a collective understanding of "what the job is" (Van Maanen, 1973). George, and other officers, insulate themselves from civilians and stigma by spending a substantial amount of time socializing with other officers both on and off-duty (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Goffman, 1963). To offset a perceived threat, some officers

described surrounding themselves with other officers to affirm a positive sense of self. Strengthening homophilus social ties, and interacting with others who hold similar attitudes, values, and beliefs, was a means of bolstering self esteem (Popielarz, 1999; Wharton, 2012). During a time of increased media scrutiny, police felt likeminded officers were easier to trust, and communicate with, than those outside of their occupational social group (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016; Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Wharton, 2012). A perceived threat, coupled with the demanding conditions and odd hours of police work, drove officers to socialize mainly with other police officers and strengthen the in-group culture that is initially internalized in the police academy.

The manifest function of police academies is to provide officers with a “cultural tool kit,” the knowledge and skills required to perform the duties of law enforcement officers (Henslin, 2015; Swidler, 1986, p. 277). For instance, officers learn to command attention through their experiences in the academy (Crank, 2015). However, as experienced by the officers I interviewed, some social scientists argue that the knowledge acquired in police academies can simultaneously contribute to police-civilian segregation (Crank, 2015; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). The ways in which officers learn to handle the unpredictability of their profession is one case in point. Recruits are constantly reminded of the unknown dangers that lurk around seemingly routine encounters, and are concurrently taught to trust their fellow officers and anticipate danger from citizens (Crank, 2015). Recruits also learn to apply outsider labels when conversing about civilians (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). “Suspect” and “perpetrator,” for instance, are both commonly utilized in police jargon (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). These labels mark

civilians as others and distinguish them as members of the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1974). This us versus them mentality may have been initiated by the pedagogy of the academy, but seems to be intensified by contemporary “threats” to police identity amongst those I studied. While interaction with likeminded officers helps the police accentuate and confirm the positive attributes of their social group during a time of increased scrutiny, this interaction simultaneously distances officers from “other” groups and exacerbates preexisting segregation (Bolton & Feagin, 2004; Crank, 2015; Kraska & Kappeler, 1997; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1974; Wharton, 2012).

“Most whites, including most police officers, have grown up and live in a highly segregated community where they have very few, or no, enduring equal status contact” with people of color (Bolton & Feagin, 2004, p. 15). The limited interactions between the races are often regimented and irregular (Bolton & Feagin, 2004). This segregation may be exacerbated as officers further separate themselves from civilians and stick closely to fellow officers who reaffirm their values. Similar to Bolton and Feagin’s (2004, p. 16) study, I found the antagonistic interactions officers face with the public, and the opposition they sense from media sources, influenced isolation amongst the officers I studied and increased their concern with protecting one another. Zimbardo (2007) warns us of the dangers of a strong “us” versus “them” mentality. Not only does the “blue curtain” increase in density and become a larger obstacle in the journey towards cultivating positive police-civilian relationships, but intergroup conflict becomes increasingly likely (Crank, 2015; Douglas, 1986; Zimbardo, 2007).

Separating collective and individual identities. A second strategy used to combat a threatened collective identity was to separate collective and individual identities as much as possible. Kyle, a rookie white officer, is one example of how many officers developed a clear divide between work and home life:

I typically don't tell anybody [I'm a police officer] actually. So, you don't see me rolling around with, you know, thin blue line flag on the back of my car or, you know, the flag at my house. You don't see that. I don't wear the thin blue line shirts when I'm off duty. You know what I mean? I just rather people not know.

Officers are social control agents bestowed with state power and gun rights denied to the majority of American citizens. Yet, increased media publicity surrounding law enforcement misconduct has lead officers to believe they are in more danger of stigmatization than ever before. Abe, for example, engages in impression management as he attempts to separate his collective and individual identities:

Ten years ago, I would have had no problem telling people when I meet them and ask me what I do for a living, "oh, yeah. I'm a police officer." Nowadays, I make up a story. You know, it could be, "I work for the streets department. I'm a street sweeper, or a landscaper for the city." You know, I always tell them I work for the city, but I just make up new, different job titles.

Abe's narrative is not unique. Officers often described avoiding the topic of their job or changing their job titles when speaking to people outside of their intimate friend and family group. This strategy of impression management was described as a means of protecting their collective identity from a presumed threat. In this case, Abe's identity as a police officer becomes a discreditable (invisible) stigma in danger of being exposed at any moment (Goffman, 1963; McLorg & Taub, 1987). Cover stories and the creation of alternative occupational identities have been found amongst other individuals in stigmatized roles as a strategy in maintaining a positive self (Charon, 1998; Henson &

Rogers, 2001). Kyle's avoidance of law enforcement symbols (like the thin blue line American flag) and Abe's use of cover stories illustrates how off-duty police earnestly attempt to conceal their careers to avoid stigma and "spoiled identities" (Goffman, 1963; McLorg & Taub, 1987, p. 215). Officers preserved their collective and individual identities by creating a boundary to maintain their separation. Kyle and Abe, like many of the participants in this study, viewed the mixing of these social selves as dangerous, and takes what they believe to be necessary precautions.

Most officers I studied discussed dangers in terms of a spoiled identity and stigmatization (Goffman, 1963). However, other officers also hinted at concern for physical danger. Officers referenced nationally publicized incidents like "the Dallas shooting," in which white officers were targeted and five were killed by a frustrated war veteran, to describe their understanding of increased physical danger (Fernandez, Perez-Pena, & Bromwich, 2016). George, a white officer with five years of law enforcement experience, was one such officer:

I know after the Dallas shootings where the 4 or 5 cops were killed in Dallas, we did get instructed by an administrator to, if we're going to write reports, we come out to the station. We don't write our reports in our car alone. We don't go to dinner alone. Basically they want us doing things in pairs.

While George describes how on-duty officers can rely on one another for protection, off-duty officers must rely on impression management to distance themselves from potential physical danger. Officers I studied avoided the topic of their jobs and changed their job titles to protect themselves from potential harm in times when they were not physically protected by the presence of other officers.

Officers are not alone in their understandings of increased danger. According to the Pew Research Center, the public also views policing as an increasingly dangerous profession (2017). Seventy percent of United States adults say policing is “more dangerous” compared to five years ago (Pew Research Center, 2017). A time period, such as “five” or “ten years ago,” was often referenced by officers in this study when describing a shift in their perceived level of threat. This time period was always in association to a perceived shift in media towards police scrutiny.

Questioning collective identity. A third response to a perceived threatened law enforcement identity was to question the identity. During a time of increased media exposure, some officers contemplated their decision to remain members of the law enforcement community. For instance, as Elliot (a white officer with seven years of experience) reflected on how he felt about the current depictions of law enforcement in the media, he said:

I think for some people it's easy to get so discouraged that you either don't want to do this job anymore or you don't want to perform at your peak. For me, it causes me to reflect on my career. I've got about 21 years left in it, which sounds like a really long time for me.

Participants who have worked in law enforcement for a substantial period of time expressed witnessing a shift in the general public's attitudes toward police. Witnessing this “change for the worse” has prompted officers to reflect and question their decision to continue in law enforcement.

Preserving collective identity. Finally, the fourth strategy officers used to respond to a perceived identity threat was to preserve their law enforcement identity. Officers used two different methods when preserving their work identity: avoiding “negative”

representations and the “bad apple” narrative. Some officers described discontinuing their interaction with media they found to be “negative” towards police. As officers reflected on what they perceived to be “negative” depictions of law enforcement in the media, their frustration became evident. As George, a white officer with five years of law enforcement experience, began reflecting on current media presentations of officers he said:

I actually deleted all of my social media accounts to kind of get away from all of that, because I was getting so angry and disgruntled with everything I was seeing (deep breath). And I try not to watch the news very often either, because all it is, is negativity towards basically us.

Activists use media images of police malpractice to challenge an unequal racial order, however this form of activism is interpreted by officers as a threat against acting officers, and not the biased system the police work within [c.f.

#blacklivesmatter (Black Lives Matter, 2013) and the hijacking of #myNYPD (Jackson & Welles, 2015)]. George does not describe increased media scrutiny as challenges to an unjust system, but says “negativity” is directed “towards us,” meaning him and his fellow officers as a collective. Additionally, George’s quote illustrates the emotions elicited from media representations of officers, and the attempts many officers make to avoid them. Distancing themselves from what they believe to be the source of “negative stereotypes” and an aversive public attitude toward police, allowed officers to continue seeing value in their profession and maintain their understanding of the profession as beneficial to the community.

Another strategy used to preserve the collective identity of officers was the “bad apple” approach. The participants in this study, like the majority of Americans, used an individualistic analysis to frame their understanding of good and evil. The majority of officers used a binary approach when constructing their understanding of the violence and racism they saw officers in the media employing on American citizens, especially when attempting to construct their understandings around those who had unlawfully killed unarmed black men. This binary approach allowed officers to create a moral barrier with evil on one side and goodness and justice on the other (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 6). When officers reflected on the unspeakable acts they witnessed law enforcement officers committing in the media, they did not see themselves in the perpetrators and could not fathom how anyone could act so “stupidly” (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 5). Steve, a white veteran corporal, expresses his frustration with the officers he sees in the media:

I mean, every once in awhile there’s a legitimate, this cop’s an idiot and did something really dumb, and makes the rest of us look bad, which pisses me off. This one guy’s making the rest of us look bad.

A reciprocal dependence links officers to one another (Goffman, 1959). Each officer depends on the conduct and behavior of his/her fellow officers, and they on his/her conduct (Goffman, 1959). This interdependence created frustration amongst officers, like Steve, when the performance of “bad apples” negatively reflected on the group (Goffman, 1959). Additionally, this narrative adequately illustrates how officers often could not identify with those whose inhumane acts were publicized. Seeing police brutality as an inherent personality flaw of individuals allowed officers to proclaim with certainty that they could never act similarly to those behaving “badly” in the media

(Zimbardo, 2007, p.6). This dispositional analysis allowed officers to point to specific individuals who have done unspeakable acts and label them “bad apples.” Hank, a Japanese and white veteran sergeant, uses the label of “bad apple” to describe the minority of “bad people” that slide through the cracks and make their ways into different professions:

There’s bad people in every profession. There’s bad bankers. There’s bad lawyers. Any profession you want, there’s going to be some bad people in there that probably shouldn’t be in that position. And it’s not different with police officers either.

Labeling individuals as bad apples indicates that they are anomalies and rare exceptions in the batch of a majority of “good apples.” Phillips (1992) argues that identities are not simply carried into the workplace, but originate from the limited possibilities afforded by the workplace. “Human actors operate within structural boundaries and make decisions within structural contexts, supports, and constraints” (Bolton & Feagin, 2004, p. 28). Labeling individuals as bad apples removes responsibility from the majority of “good” officers and ignores social context, external forces, and power relations within the organization of law enforcement (Wharton, 2012; Zimbardo, 2007, p. 6).

The idea that people behave immorally solely because they are inherently bad has been discredited (Zimbardo, 2007). Zimbardo (2007) for instance advocates for the “bad barrel makers” analysis. In the barrel makers level of analysis, there is an understanding that the barrier between good and evil is permeable and alterable (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 3). This analysis explains how the powerful, who construct and design the barrel (environment), highly influence the apples within the barrel (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 9). Zimbardo (2007, p. 10) would argue the power elite construct the situational conditions

that, in turn, influence the behavioral patterns of the officers within the law enforcement system. To better the actions of individual officers, Zimbardo (2007) argues the corrupting situation must change. For instance, when the social context labels people of color as threatening “reasonable [officers] act irrationally; independent [officers] act in mindless conformity; and peaceful [officers] act as warriors” (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 11). Otherwise “good” officers are more likely to commit horrendous acts toward people of color who are often dehumanized in their social environment (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 12). To make alterations to such external factors, Zimbardo argues, the controlling system must first be transformed (2007). Making such alterations proves to be difficult, because elites use their power over institutions to perpetuate the myth of the bad apple (Mills, 1956; Zimbardo, 2007, p. 10). Institutions, such as law, are founded on this perspective, and continuously feed the individualistic viewpoint to officers who participate within them. The elite make sure the masses’ understanding of evil is limited to ensure the elite’s powerful positions remain unquestioned and preserved (Mills, 1956; Zimbardo, 2007).

Goffman’s (1963) concepts of impression management and stigma help illustrate the incentives behind officers’ strategies of adaptation. The stigma officers believe to be attached to their occupational identity lead participants in this study to engage in impression management and respond to their newly perceived threatened identity in four distinct ways. First, some officers strengthen their collective identity by isolating themselves from civilians and spending more time on and off-duty strengthening their bonds with fellow likeminded officers. Secondly, a number of officers separate their

collective and individual identities. These officers only want to be known as law enforcement officers on-duty, and they work towards concealing their occupational identities when off-duty. Thirdly, some officers question their membership as officers and deliberate over the choice of remaining in the occupation. Lastly, officers work towards preserving their collective identity by avoiding what they describe as “negative” media and by using a bad apple narrative that distances the “few bad police officers” from the larger group of heroes. These four coping strategies, in turn, hold great potential in negatively impacting police-civilian relationships.

Conclusion

This research project explores the ways in which officers think about and experience their jobs during a time of increased media surveillance. Ultimately, I found the new visibility of policing and current public discourse surrounding police violence generates impactful social interactions that influence the development of police identity. Officers construct their realities by imagining how they appear to the public using their understandings of media sources. Their interactions with media and civilians lead officers to imagine how they are evaluated by others. These negative interpretations ultimately provoked law enforcement officers in this study to develop a threatened law enforcement identity. Police in this study come to believe their occupational identities are stigmatized by the general public. This perceived stigmatization prompted participants to adapt to newly perceived threats using four main strategies. Officers strengthened their collective identity, separated their collective and individual identities, questioned their collective identity, and preserved their collective identity to counter stigma and to work towards defining their new social reality.

Officers do not have a systemic understanding of racism in law enforcement, and they indirectly, and often unconsciously, preserve the biased institution as they work towards defending their own selves. Officers act on the basis of meanings they attach to increased surveillance and media scrutiny. The perspectives of officers limit their understanding and interpretation of the outside world (Charon, 1998, p. 4). Police have come to see media exposure not as a challenge to the institution they work within, but to the collective identity of law enforcement officers. Officers attempted to manage the perceived threat

by strengthening their collective identity, separating their collective and individual identities, questioning their collective identity, and preserving their collective identity. Together, these coping strategies allow officers to adjust to a newly vulnerable social environment, but simultaneously and indirectly relieves the institution and the power elite from responsibility (Mills, 1956). Officers seem to question everyone but the system they work within. They blame the media, racist individual officers, racially conscious civilians, and even themselves when they ask if they are “cut out for the job.” The finger is pointed at everyone but the institution, which inevitably weakens police-civilian relationships, increases the likelihood of police-civilian conflict, presents a central problem to reformation, and subtly reproduces racial privilege in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2000; Smith, 1995). While the overt racism of individual officers disproportionately killing black male civilians is now broadcasted and scrutinized on nationwide news outlets, the covert racism imbedded within the justice system remains invisible and unaffected (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Contemporary racial inequality flourishes as the biased institution remains unquestioned (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

This study offers a sociological analysis of police identity construction that explains, in part, the increasing divide between the public and the police. This study gives insight into the maintenance of a harmful status quo and disrupts the continuation of unquestioned inequality. A better understanding of how identity is developed offers insight into ways it can be changed. The contextual and historically evolving nature of social identities makes the ongoing analysis of the collective law enforcement identity imperative. Analyses of officers in other segments of American society and different

historical periods would be beneficial in completing our understanding of media's impact on police identity.

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Appendix A

Hello

My name is Sara.

I am currently attending San Jose State for my masters and I am conducting research on officers. I was hoping to get into contact with someone who could put me in contact with officers who might be willing to participate.

Do you have a few minutes for me to explain what I'm doing a little?

So, I am looking at how law enforcement officers, corporals, and sergeants think about and experience their jobs.

I don't believe we've given enough of a voice to law enforcement officers especially in research.

The interviews will last about an hour and I am willing to meet at a time and place of their/your choosing.

The interviews will be tape recorded but the interview tapes will be destroyed after I transcribe them and all participation will be kept completely confidential. I will not be using the names of my participants or their department names.

I know officers are very busy, but I'd really appreciate the help. Are they/you available to meet this week or next week sometime? I can also have an interview the following week if that's better.

When and where would work best for you? (will there be a quiet place we can do the interview at?)

Perfect, I'll see you there then.

Thank you again so much.

Have a great rest of your day.

Bye

Appendix B

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH A CLOSER LOOK INTO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE

Sara Rodrigues, a graduate student at San Jose State University, is conducting this research study. This research will be supervised by faculty advisor, Dr. Susan Murray.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to investigate how law enforcement officers experience and think about their jobs. Little research has collected first hand accounts of how officers experience and think about their careers. By participating in this research, you will have the opportunity to help close this gap and expand the knowledge of researchers on this topic.

PROCEDURES

If you decide to volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked a series of questions in an interview. The interview will take place at a time and place of your choosing. The interview will be audio recorded and will take about an hour to complete. In the interview, participants will be asked questions regarding their personal backgrounds, job experiences, and interactions with the public and with media.

POTENTIAL RISKS

Participants may experience distress discussing their past experiences. Participants do not have to answer any question that may cause them discomfort. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. Participation is completely voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Although you will not directly benefit from your participation in the research, your input will give law enforcement a voice and may inform future programs that could potentially better law enforcement job experiences.

COMPENSATION

There is no compensation for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study, and that can identify you, will remain confidential. No personal names or department names will be linked with any response. Data will be labeled with a coded number, not with the participant's name. Data will be kept in a password protected computer available only to Sara Rodrigues, the researcher.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect on your relations with San Jose State University. You also have the right to skip any question you do not wish to answer. This consent form is not a contract. It is a written explanation of what will happen during the study if you decide to participate. You will not waive any rights if you choose not to participate, and there is no penalty for stopping your participation in the study.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you may contact the researcher, Sara Rodrigues, at this email address: saraserparodrigues@yahoo.com. Complaints about the research may be presented to Dr. Carlos Garcia, the Department Chair of sociology at San Jose State University. Dr. Garcia can be contacted at (408) 924-5804 or at carlos.e.garcia@sjsu.edu. For questions about participants' rights or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Pamela Stacks, Associate Vice President of the Office of Research, San Jose State University, at 408-924-2479.

☐ I give my consent to be audio recorded during the duration of this interview, and I understand my right to withdraw from the study at any time.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to be a part of the study, that the details of the study have been explained to you, that you have been given time to read this document, and that your questions have been answered. You will receive a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant's Name (printed)	Participant's Signature	Date
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RESEARCHER STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to learn about the study and ask questions. It is my opinion that the participant understands his/her rights and the purpose, risks, benefits, and procedures of the research and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent	Date
--	------

Appendix C

Demographic Face Sheet

Participant #: _____

Gender: M _____ F _____

Age: _____

Ethnicity/Race: _____

Law Enforcement Ranking: _____

Email: _____

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. If you can just start off by telling me about how you got into law enforcement...
 - a. What was it about the job that drew you to it?
2. Could you describe your job and your role as an officer?
 - a. What are some differences and similarities between each of those roles?
3. Could you describe a day in the life of you as an officer?
4. What are some things that you like about your job?
5. Tell me about one of the best days on the job.
6. What are some things you dislike about your job?
7. Tell me about one of the worst days on the job.
8. Tell me about your relationship with the public.
9. Could you tell me about your relationship with other officers?
10. How do you experience being an officer off duty?
11. Tell me about your relationship with media representations.
 - a. What do you see?
12. What are your thoughts on and experiences with body cameras?
13. What are your thoughts and experiences regarding cell phones and cameras used by civilians?
14. What is something I didn't ask that you want to tell me about?
15. Do you have any questions for me?
16. If I look over this interview and I have a question, is it okay if I email you?